

MINI-GOLF PRODUCT FEATURE

# Advice for Choosing a Miniature Golf Construction Company

By Bob Lahey

A mistake will cost you money.

Whether you are an entrepreneur looking to get started in the family entertainment business or a seasoned veteran who has decided a new miniature golf course is the right investment, the path from idea to reality is complex.



*Research is the cornerstone of remodeling or constructing a successful miniature golf course.*

New business owners have to analyze the revenue potential and the operating cost, which by the way is very low, next purchase or lease a great piece of land with excellent visibility and secure the financing for the project. Now it is time to select a construction company. Unfortunately, selecting the right company is like picking the right bottle of wine. The right bottle is the perfect accompaniment to your evening. The wrong bottle leaves you with bad taste in your mouth and a headache the next morning.

Here are a few suggestions that will make the selection taste like the best bottle of wine imaginable.



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### Do Your Research

Get out and visit as many miniature golf courses as possible. Play the courses and watch others play. Are the holes fun and interesting? Is the course crowded? Is everyone enjoying themselves or are they frustrated because the course is too hard? Maybe they are bored because it was too easy. Talk with the owner or course manager. Ask questions about the pace of play. Solicit feedback from the players. Determine how long it typically takes to play the course. Make note of what you like and make sure to discuss it with the course designer.

### Selecting the Right Company

Building a miniature golf course is part construction project and part art form. Therefore, work with a company that specializes in miniature golf construction. The fact that a contractor can pour concrete is no indication he can build a miniature golf course. A well-constructed miniature golf course has lots of contouring, multi-level shots, elevation changes and water to enhance the beauty and playability of the course. It will entice customers to return again and again.

Experience matters, the more courses built, the better the result. Ask each company how many years they have been in business and the number of miniature golf courses built. An experienced construction crew has at one time or another worked through most of the obstacles that can come up during construction. And yes, there will be obstacles to overcome!

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Customer testimonials are a good source in helping to select the perfect construction company. An experienced builder should be able to provide customer references and sites. Call the references. Inquire about expectations of the builder and how the builder performed against their expectations. Always ask about the construction process. Did the contractor confront adversity? How did he handle the problem? A lot can be learned about a construction company by finding out how they deal with on the job issues. Did they do a quality job? Did they finish by the date promised? This may well be the best 30 minutes spent investigating your construction company.

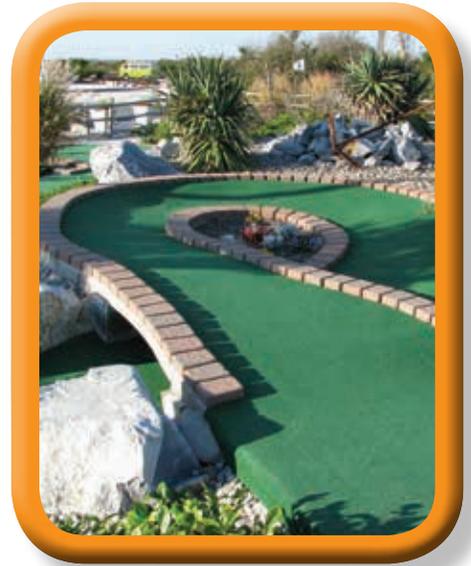
A good company employs in-house designers that work exclusively on designing miniature

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golf courses. A seasoned designer understands how to incorporate different elevations to enhance the curb appeal of the course and still stay within Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. He knows how to design a course that is fun for the entire family, with the right mix of challenging and easier holes. A good design rewards a good putt with a hole in one and does not heavily penalize a poor putt. No one wants to be frustrated when they are enjoying a family night out! A quality plan allows for the “flow” of the game and minimizes bottlenecks and stoppage of play throughout the entire course. Lastly, in-house designers work closely with their construction crews on a

regular basis. This working relationship provides continuity between design and construction.

Miniature golf construction is a seasonal business. Work with a company that has construction crews available during the peak spring and early summer construction seasons.



*Choosing the right company to design and build your mini golf course is critical.*

Every day waiting for a construction crew to become available, is another day that you are not making money. Work with a company that assigns construction crews exclusively to its customers until the project is complete.

Another huge consideration is state licensing for construction contractors. Each state's requirements differ. Does your state require the licensing of contractors? Does your contractor hold a license in your state? In most instances, a licensed



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4 contractor must demonstrate not only functional competence, but also the financial capability to perform. Licensed contractors are required to have workers compensation and liability insurance. Competent contractors will gladly provide proof of such insurance before work begins. If someone is injured during the construction project you may be liable if the contractor is not insured.

In the end, hiring a non-licensed contractor in a state that requires licensing may limit your legal recourse against a claim for nonperformance and may result in fines and other penalties.

### Marketing

Every business needs a robust marketing plan to ensure success. It is well recognized that today's operators must compete for their share of the market. The successful owner must rise above his competition. Don't expect that just because you built it they will come.

However, a beautiful, well designed and constructed miniature golf course will ensure that they will come back!

Ask the contractor for ideas on how to market your business. A good builder understands what customers want and can provide good marketing guidance. Does the builder have a marketing manual as part of the project bundle?

Selecting the right miniature golf construction company has a direct impact on your long-term success. Follow the guidance provided here. Do the research. Select a construction company that is most capable of meeting your needs. And aggressively market the business. 🚀

*Bob Lahey is general manager of Harris Miniature Golf. Reach him by calling 609-522- 4200 or emailing bob@harrisminigolf.com.*



*After opening your miniature golf course, aggressive marketing is key to success.*